REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

DR. RANBIR SINGH (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, I lay a copy (in English and Hindi) of the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1996-97) on Action Taken Report on Krishi Vigyan Kendra on the Recommendations / Observations contained in the Thirty-sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1995-1996) (Tenth Lok Sabha).

RE. DELAY IN APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF CAUVERY WATER TRIBUNAL—Contd.

जल-संसाधन मंत्री (श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र): उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, आम तौर से ज़ीरो ऑवर में जो बातें उठाई जाती हैं, उन पर कुछ कहना सरकार की तरफ से ठीक नहीं है और बोला भी नहीं जाता इतनी जल्दी, लेकिन माननीय नारायणसामी और उनके साथियों ने कावेरी जल विवाद को लेकर के जो चिंता जताई है, उन पर उतनी ही चिंतित वर्तमान सरकार है। उस जल विवाद प्राधिकरण के अध्यक्ष की हैसियत से जस्टिस मुखर्जी ने इस्तीफा दिया और तब से लगातार यह प्रयास चल रहा है, सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के मुख्य न्यायाधीश से निवेदन किया जा रहा है कि वे किसी दूसरे जज की नियुक्ति करें आज मैं सवेरे जब अपने कार्यालय में बैठा था तो एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि सर्वोच्च न्यायालय से यह जानकारी मिली है कि किसी जज का नाम उन्होंने क्लीअर किया है। अभी तक उसके लिए कोई कम्युनिकेशन हमारे पास नहीं है, इसलिए हम नहीं कह सकते, लेकिन जैसे ही वहां से नाम आता है, उस न्यायाधीश का नाम ट्रिब्यूनल में रखकर इसकी कार्रवाई प्रारम्भ करा दी जाएगी।

RE. ISSUE FOR DISCUSSION AT WTO CONFERENCE AT SINGAPORE FOR SETTING UP A GLOBAL REGIME OF INVESTMENT LAWS HAVING SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN ECONOMY

SHRI ASHOK MITRA (West Bengal): I am running against the clock. Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir we are supposed to be a sovereign Parliament but it also devolves on us to be alert so that this sovereignty is protected. Now, I would not like to go into the circumstances which let to our signing the World Trade Organisation Treaty. Some of us feel that even by signing the treaty, some of the sovereignty of our Parliament has been abrogated. Forget about the past. We should be more concerned about the future. Next Monday, the World Trade Organisation Secretariat has convened a five-day long Ministerial meeting with a very ambitious agenda.

They tried to pass the agenda at the conference of ambassadors of the 125 member countries, but because of the strong resistance put up by the poorer countries, they could not pass it at the ambassadorial level. They are now making a further attempt at the ministerial-level meeting in Singapore.

The principal items of the agenda are the following:

Firstly, from now on there should be a common frame of investment laws. They will decide. They will sit in judgment. They will decide whether we can allow foreigners to come into the country and on what terms they would come in. We have nothing to say. They will decide.

Another thing is of a financial nature. That also we have to accept. They will decide. They will decide as to what will be the structure of company taxation. We do not have to sit here an debate it. Mr. Chaidambaram need not have to decide as to what will be the structure of company taxation. They will decide as to this is the kind of thing we should have.

Thirdly, they are insisting that within the next six or eight months, we must agree to completely scrap our import duty structure in regard to the import of electronic goods. At the same time, if we ask them: 'what about the import duty you are imposing, or the quantitative restrictions that you are imposing on our textiles, on our shoes?', they are turning the other way. They would not respond.

Finally, Sir—I am looking at the clock; I am concluding—they would like to impose on us certain trade union regulations and labour conditions which would suit their interests and which would impinge on our external competitiveness.

They would also like their banking and insurance companies to have a free entry into our country. But the moment we ask them: 'what about allowing some of our labour into your countries?', they say: 'no; thank you'.

This is the kind of international regime they want to impose on us.

I understand we are sending a ministerial delegation, a strong team, with the Minister of Commerce leading it. I wish there is a statement on this from the Government, telling us as to what brief has been given to our delegation.

There have been many statements by the Prime Minister.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI): Mr. Mitra, I think you will have to conclude now.

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: At the Conference of Commerce Ministers at New Delhi also, this issue came up. But these long meetings, these long series of breakfasts, lunches and dinners could be a dangerous thing because some of the officers could be a little more malleable than others.

This is something which you have to insist on. There should be no surrender of our sovereignty. The whole issue has to be discussed in detail with us, in Parliament. It is our prerogative.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI): Mr. Agarwal, please (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: I wish the Government comes forward with a statement on this.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL (Rajasthan): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I fully associate myself with what my esteemed colleague, Mr. Ashok Mitra, has said.

I would like to say only this much that this is a very serious question—the question of compromising the economic sovereignty of India which is being done at Singapore. The Western powers and other developed countries are planning to exploit the whole WTO provisions against India. We have to guard against it.

Unfortunately, Sir, this Government is totally apathetic and indifferent to the implications of the WTO agreement. I think the demand is quite clear. There should be a full-fledged debate and discussion in the House on the implications of the WTO investment regime, insurance and banking sectors, investment proposals, FDI, etc., etc., which are being debated. It would have been better for the Minister, before going to other countries, to have taken the House into confidence, discussed the issue with the various political parties and ascertained their views. It is not a partly issue. It is a national issue. I fully associate myself with Mr. Ashok Mitra and support his demand.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I associate myself with what Mr. Ashok Mitra has said.

This is a very serious matter. I am not going into the merits or demerits of the WTO agreement. But the WTO has become an instrument in the hands of the developed nations to exploit the developing nations. This is the basic question. It is for us now to take it up at the diplomatic level. We should initiate action in this regard and organise all the developing countries in order to protect the interests of not only our country, but the interests of the other developing countries as well. This initiative must come from the hon. Minister. I hope the the sentiments of this House would be taken into account by the Minister and I

hope the initiative would be taken by the Government to protect the interests of all the developing nations.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI): It is very important for the economic future of the country. The House, I am sure, would be taken into confidence at the earliest.

With your permission, we now adjourn...

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Sir, before we adjourn there should be a clarification. What about the admitted Special Mentions which have been carried over from yesterday to today? Will they be taken up or not

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI): They will be taken up.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: When? They have been carried over from yesterday.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI): Probably they will be taken up tomorrow.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: When? There will be the usual Zero Hour submissions and Special Mentions...(*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI): Immediately after the House reassembles, we will see...(*Interruptions*)...

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): Yes, we will take up arrears of the Special Mentions also. After the House reassembles, we can...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Which means he doesn't mean business....(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Sir, why do you allow this when names are not there?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI): Depending on the emotive nature of the subject, like the one you have mentioned, as you know, sometimes it has been the practice of the Chair to allow one or two other persons, like Mr. Vayalar Ravi or Mr. Satish Agarwal to associate themselves. I think the schedule for the afternoon will be announced by whoever occupies the Chair then, and I have no doubt that it will be to the satisfaction of all concerned—all sides and all the memebrs.

We now adjourn for lunch, to reassemble at 2.05 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at seven minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at eight minutes past two of the clock, The Vice-Chairman (Shrimati Jayanthi Natarajan) in the Chair.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Madam Vice-Chairman, what about Zero Hour Mentions and Special Mentions?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SMT. JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: The Zero Hour is over.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: What about Speical Mentions?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SMT. JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: If any Members want to make them, I will call them. Members who have given their names for Special Mentions....

SHRI S. PETER ALPHONSE (Tamil Nadu): my name is pending for the last two days.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SMT. JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: I will call them in order.

The Zero Hour was over in the morning. Now I will call those who have given their names for making Special Mentions.

Mr. satyanarayana Dronamraju. Not present.

Mr. Parag Chaliha. Not Present.

Mr. Satish Agarwal.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Sanction given to M/s Pulakesi Power Co. and M/s Westo Power Generation Limited by the Ministry of Power without I.P.U. clearance by C.E.A. up to 31.3.1996

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL (Rajasthan): Madam Vice-Chairman, I am raising a question of great importance regarding some policy prescriptions made by this Government.

I understand that according to the Standing Committee Report the last date for the MOU route in private power projects was February, 1995, but according to the latest Government circular I understand that it has been extended up to 31.3.1996. After that no private power project could come through the MOU route.

But, Madam, you will be surprised to know how discriminatory it is and what foul smell there is in this Government Orde dated November 14, 1996. Two power companies, one M/s Pulakesi Power Co., and other M/s Westo Power Generation Limited, applied somewhere in September or October. They applied somewhere in September or October and they were not given any In-Principle Clearance by the Central Electricity Authority. But the Power Ministry has issued an order. I have got a copy of the order. It reads:

> "Vide this Minister's OM of even number, dated 17.10.1996, CEA has been advised to consider the proposal of M/s NRI Capital Corporation (Pulakeshi Power Company) for setting up a 500 MW Thermal Power Project near Bangalore in Karnataka for "In-Principle" Clearance. It had been stipulated by the Ministry of Power that the MOU cases were to obtain the In-Principle Clearance by CEA by 31.3.1996."

Madam, note here:

> "Hence in the instant case, as it has been decided now, to agree to the request of the Government of Karnataka to treat the proposal at par with other MOU cases, instead of CEA processing the case for IPC, Detailed Project Report to be submitted by M/s Pulakeshi Company may be considered for techno-economic clearance of CEA after it is submitted."

Now, when the Government has put a deadline that after 31st March, 1996, MOU route is not available for private power operators, how is it that these two cases, which belong to NRIs of Singapore, are being treated with other MOU cases w.e.f. 31.3.1996? This gives a bad smell. The Government should come out clearly as to what their policy is with regard to privatisation in the power sector. Why are you playing with the power sector like this? This is discriminatory. This is stinking. This gives a bad smell. Why has this decision been taken to protect these two foreign companies to set up power projects through MOU route, which is not legally or as per policy prescription available to these companies? Why has this order been made? I want a clarification from the Government on this.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Madam, the 32nd report of the Standing Committee of the Ministry of Energy was placed on the Table of the House on 22nd December, 1995. The reply of the Government in that report is and I quote and finish:

> "The decision taken by the Government of India in January 1995: Bidding for SEBs and State Governments has been made mandatory since 1995."

That means, since February 1995, no MOU route is available to SEBs and State Governments. This report has been